

Navy, Negroes in - 1935.

Department Chief Confirms Navy's Jim Crow Policy

All but Waiters, Cooks
and Valets Must be

White, NAACP Told.

COULDN'T MAINTAIN
DISCIPLINE, CLAIM

Andrews Hopes Letter
Makes Policy Clear.

Policy Clearly Defined

"The selection of men to man the Navy is left to the discretion of the executive branch of the government. In the exercise of this discretion the Navy Department endeavors to furnish naval vessels with crews consisting of men best qualified to meet the requirements of the special rating and branch to which they are assigned. This policy not only serves the best interests of the Navy but serves as well the best interests of the men themselves.

"I hope that the above will give you a clean understanding of the policy existing at present in the United States Navy regarding the enlistment of colored men."

The N.A.A.C.P. national office in New York is continuing its inquiries of the War Department with respect to the treatment of our soldiers at present in the regular army and the enlistment of others in the various branches of the Army.

Mr. President--

CHICAGO, Ill.—None but whites may enlist in the U.S. Navy, except as messmen (waiters, cooks and valets), according to an official statement of Rear Admiral Adolphus Andrews, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department, Washington, contained in a letter addressed to the Chicago branch of the N.A.A.C.P. in response to persistent inquiries from the branch's president, A. C. McNeal.

"After many years of experience," the letter states, "the policy of not enlisting men of the colored race for the seaman and other branches of the naval service, except the messman branch, was adopted to meet the best interest of general ship efficiency.

"Experience in former years has shown clearly that men of the colored race, if enlisted in the seaman branch and promoted to the position of petty officers, cannot maintain discipline among the men of the white race over whom they may be placed by reason of their rating, and that as a result, team work, harmony, and ship efficiency are seriously handicapped.

"The whole training and distribution system of the Navy makes it essential that men of any particular rating be available for any duty required of that rating throughout the Navy.

Negroes are less and less welcome in the United States navy. Though they have not ask that Negroes be used, but they certainly should be tried. If only for the sake of engendering in their 12 million of citizens the feeling that this is their country, whose flag they are to defend, both the navy and the army should be free of race and color discriminations.

In 1934 the ratings in the navy held by Negroes were chief commissary steward ship's cook in three classes, baker, officer's steward in three classes, mess attendant in three classes, gunner's mate second class, seaman second class, storekeeper first class, machinist's mate in two classes, water tender in two classes, fireman first class, musician first class, first musician and bandmaster. Approximately 766 Negroes were in the service in June, 1934.

But if Rear Admiral Adolphus Andrews' plan to restrict Negro enlistment prevails, the Negro gunner who was with Dewey at Manila Bay will have no successor. Andrews explains that years of experience have shown that men of the colored race, if promoted, could not enforce discipline among whites and that

team work and ship efficiency were handicapped. The government, he says, can do as it pleases about enlistment. He concludes with the assurance which always accompanies the injunction to a Negro to "stay in his place," namely that the new limitation is best for them.

When the navy's blimp went down in the Pacific with Asiatic members of the crew suspected of sabotage, this paper asked the navy department how it happened that aliens held posts which loyal Negroes might have had. It was almost indignant that its judgment should be questioned.

We do question the wisdom of this further restriction on Negro enlistments. The navy—and the army—are for war. They are not playthings for beaurocrats, to be manned on the preference basis. If a Negro could shoot a gun for Dewey, his son should get a chance today. We do not ask that Negroes be used, but they certainly should be tried. If only for the sake of engendering in their 12 million of citizens the feeling that this is their country, whose flag they are to defend, both the navy and the army should be free of race and color discriminations.

It is not necessary to deny Rear Admiral Andrew's statement that Negroes cannot be promoted because it would mean a lessening of efficiency. Perry won at Lake Erie and Dewey at Manila. Many are the nation's victories when Negroes had higher places than messmen.

President Roosevelt has much to do. He ought not be burdened with anything which can be done by others in the administration. But if others do not see how discrimination against the Negro in the navy—and in the army where combat units have been made laborers—will have repercussions among all Negroes, he as commander-in-chief can direct his subordinates to stop. The Negro, however he is treated in peace, at least should feel free to offer his life for his country in war.

Waco, N. C. Enterprise
November 28, 1935

Recruiting Negro Boys

For United States Navy

The following letter was received from the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Washington, D. C.

Subject: Applicants for enlistment as mess attendant, third class.

The prospects for advancement of clean, well behaved, ambitious, and proficient colored boys, are very good at the present time and probably will continue as Filipinos have not been accepted for first enlistment as mess attendants since December, 1930 and those now in the messman branch are rapidly being transferred to the Fleet Reserve.

All colored boys who live in the following counties, Ashe, Alexander, Catawba, Davidson, Davie, Alleghany, Iredell, Rowan, Surry, Wilkes, and Yadkin and are interested in the Navy as a career should make their application at the U. S. Navy Recruiting sub-station, Salisbury, located in the post office building.

Office hours are from 9 to 4:30, except Saturday, 9 to 1.

CHARGE NAVY
UNFAIR TO RACE

Negroes Only Used in Menia

Posts

Chicago, Nov. 1.—Negro Americans who might desire to serve their country in the U. S. Navy can enlist only as messmen (waiters, cooks and valets), according to an official statement of Rear Admiral Adolphus Andrews, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

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In answer to four questions asked by A. C. McNeal, president of the Chicago branch, Rear Admiral Andrews, answered in part as follows:

"After many years of experience," the letter states, "the policy of not enlisting men of the colored race for the seaman and other branches of the Naval Service, except the messman branch, was adopted to meet the best interest of general ship efficiency. Experience in former years has shown clearly that men of the colored race, if enlisted in the seaman branch and promoted to the position of petty officers, cannot maintain discipline

among the men of the white race over to muster all the patriotism and loyalty of Negroes whom they may be placed by reason of their rating, and that as a result, team work, harmony and ship efficiency are seriously handicapped." The N. A. A. C. P. national office in New York is continuing its inquiries of the War department with every hand and with countries striving respect to the treatment of the Negro

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In view of the unsettled conditions in the world, with talk of war on every hand and with countries striving

Openings In Navy for Negroes

Twelve young Negroes from North and South Carolina are to be enlisted in the messman branch of the Naval service during the month of October. The duties of these men consist of general serving work in the Officer's quarters with advancement later to officer's cooks and stewards. To be eligible for enlistment a young Negro must be between eighteen and twenty-five years of age, of good character, must be able to read, write and do simple arithmetic and must pass a rigid physical examination. Applications for enlistment are being received at the Navy Recruiting Station, Postoffice Building, Greenwood, every week day from 9:00 a. m. to 4:30 p. m., excepting Saturdays when the hours are 9:00 a. m. to 1:00 p. m.

ADMIRAL ADMITS NAVY NEGRO BAN

May 11-9-35
Enlist Only in
Ship Kitchens

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In answer to four questions asked by A. C. MacNeal, president of the Chicago branch, Rear Admiral Andrews answered that the policy of the Navy department is to restrict the enlistment of colored men to the messman branch of the Navy, believing that such procedure will best meet the needs and efficiency of the

Navy; that the present instructions to recruiting stations throughout the country are not to enlist colored men as apprentice seamen.

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